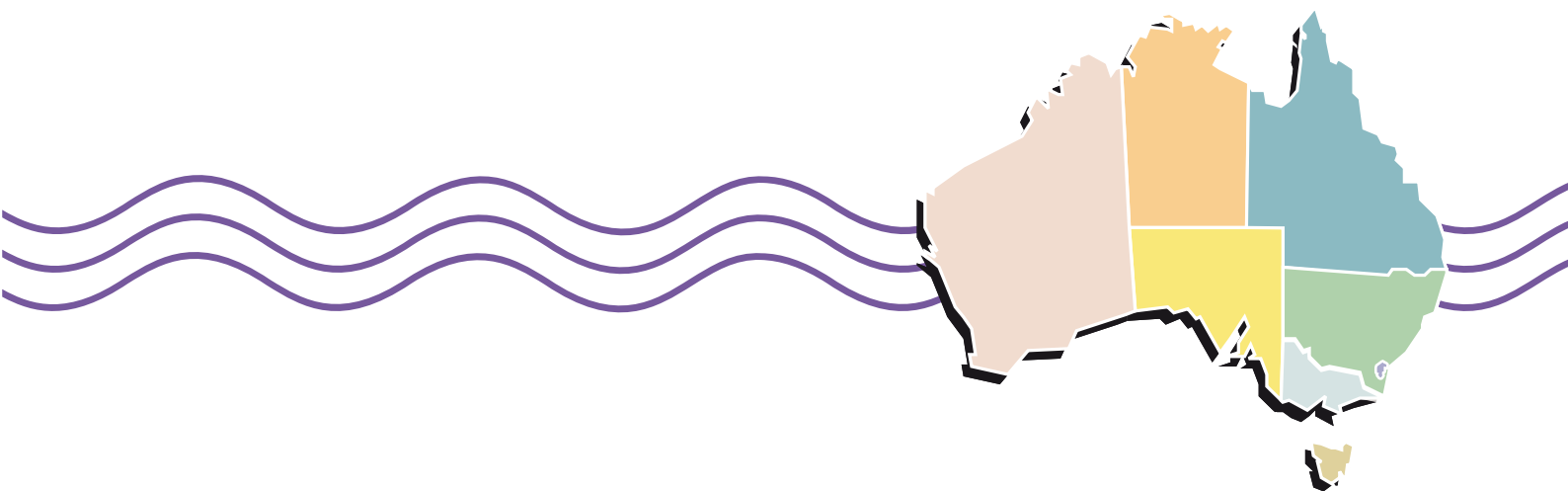


Population Flows: Immigration Aspects

Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

January 2006



Population Flows: Immigration Aspects was prepared by
Economic and Demographic Analysis Section
Migration Branch
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

The Department's website at www.immi.gov.au contains this publication as well as a wide variety of additional information on Departmental activities.

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A strong, well-planned migration program has been one of the foundations of Australia's prosperity. The government continues to shape the migration program to ensure that it helps to meet the skilled labour needs of Australian business and industry as well as important social and demographic objectives.

The global competition for skilled workers is increasing and will increase further in future years. Australia remains a favoured destination, in part because it is recognised that migrants have fared well in the Australian community. They contribute to and benefit from a diverse, multicultural, prosperous society.

In 2005-06 we will deliver one of the largest Migration Programs ever in the range of 130,000-140,000. Nearly 100,000 of these will enter under the Skill Stream of the program. In line with our determination to be highly responsive to the needs of the Australian economy, we have increased our level of engagement with the business community to a new level. My department has out-posted 16 officers to work with 19 key business and industry organisations. The department has worked with industry to run a series of expositions which bring employers and prospective skilled migrants together. Expos have already been run in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, London, Berlin, Amsterdam and Chennai. The feed-back from participating employers and organisations has been highly positive. In addition the department has organised numerous seminars with Australian employers in metropolitan and regional Australia to inform them of the various visa options available to them for the recruitment of skilled workers.

Our increased engagement with industry is part of our strategy to maximise the level of targeting within the Skill Stream of the Migration program. The 2004-05 migration program outcome was the most highly skilled programs ever, with 77,880 places in the Skill stream. These migrants are playing a vital role in helping to address the critical skill shortages felt by employers in local communities across Australia. Our targeting strategy involves maximising the number of employer sponsored skilled migrants. These migrants go straight into a job when they arrive in Australia and all parties benefit from this. The next level of priority is accorded to skilled migrants who are sponsored by State and Territory governments.

Within the General Skilled Migration categories (most of which are points tested) we give priority to applicants who have occupations which are in national demand.

All these targeting mechanisms help to ensure good labour market outcomes for our skilled migrants and good labour market outcomes mean effective settlement.

This edition of Population Flows includes the preliminary results from the third Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia. The results confirm that recent migrants are doing better than ever in the labour market. More of them are employed quickly, and their average earnings continue to grow.

Almost 18,700 state-specific and regional migration visas were granted in 2004-05. This is an all time high. It is a 47 per cent increase on the previous year's result, reflecting the success of

more flexible program to encourage migrants to settle in states and regions where they are most needed. 4,140 were directly sponsored by employers in regional areas.

Australia has also made it easier in recent years for successful overseas students, working holiday makers and long term business entrants to stay permanently in Australia. Few other countries encourage permanent migration in this way.

Permanent migration is not the only immigration mechanism for assisting the growth of our skilled labour force. The temporary entry of skilled workers is a vital part of the picture. A highly mobile skilled workforce is an intrinsic part of the modern world and skilled people move frequently to where their skills are in demand. Australia provides a suite of visa options that help meet this global reality in a fast and efficient way. In 2004-05 almost 50,000 long stay business visas were granted to business people and skilled personnel seeking to stay in Australia for up to 4 years. A significant proportion of these temporary entrants convert onshore to permanent visas on the basis of sponsorship from their employers.

This emphasis on attracting skilled migrants has a strong positive impact on the economy. Researchers have found tangible benefits on Australia's living standards and on government budgets.

The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the increased Refugee and Humanitarian Program by continuing the program at 13,000 new places for 2005-06.

Ninety two percent of humanitarian visas were granted offshore in 2004-05, ensuring that our efforts target those in the greatest need of resettlement, as determined by the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees. Australians can be justifiably proud that they support a Program that delivers resettlement to some of the world's most vulnerable people.

The above comments focus on the particular directions we have imparted to our programs to advance our national interests and to act as a good international citizen. Population Flows gives a holistic picture of the way in which various components of our immigration systems operate and impact upon the broader population picture. It also helps to place these movements in a broader demographic context. It contains a wealth of specific data to inform the important community discussion on this vital area of public policy.

It is with pride that I, as the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, present this, the third edition of Population Flows since I have been minister.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Vanstone". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amanda Vanstone

Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs



Australia's commitment to a successful migration program is reinforced and supported by our strong commitment to the provision of settlement services. One will not succeed without the other.

Australia has a well-deserved international reputation for the comprehensive and positive settlement services provided to new migrants and refugees.

The migration program has focussed on filling skill shortages, particularly in regional Australia. Our competitive edge in the international contest to attract skilled workers relies not only on the Australian lifestyle, but also on the assistance we provide to help people participate quickly and fully in all the community has to offer.

The emphasis on refugees from Africa has continued. In 2005-06 Africa is expected to account for around 60 per cent of all people resettled in Australia under the refugee and humanitarian program.

We have continued to reassess and refine the provision of settlement services to respond to shifting priorities and the complexity of the issues faced by new arrivals. These changes recognise that new and emerging communities need particular attention and that the demography of settlement is continuously shifting.

The significant number of people arriving each year from diverse backgrounds continues to broaden Australia's outlook. This is a time when it is more important than ever to be an inclusive society.

The Government has implemented a range of policies and programs aimed at ensuring all Australians are encouraged to participate together, free from intolerance and extremism. Programs such as the Living in Harmony initiative encourage people to work together to foster acceptance, respect, cohesion and understanding. Other multicultural programs aim to ensure that the social and economic benefits of cultural diversity are maximised.

Acquisition of citizenship is an integral step in the settlement process. It creates a sense of belonging to the wider Australian community.

Australian citizenship involves commitment to Australia and its people and a broad set of civic values. It is important that all citizens understand the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

This publication looks at the changing nature of Australia's population and migration program and the settlement patterns of new arrivals. I am delighted to commend it to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Cobb', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

John Cobb
Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
January 2006



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